

APPROVED AS AMENDED BY THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN

**TOWN OF DARIEN
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MARCH 20, 2006**

ATTENDANCE: Evonne Klein; Kevin Newman; Susan Young; Barbara Thorne and Linda Santarella.

STAFF: John Crary, Administrative Officer

OTHERS: Martha Rhein; Joseph Warren, RTM Parks & Rec Committee; Virginia Iqbal; George Zengo; Cheryl Russell, Chairman, RTM Parks & Recreation Committee; Jim Backus; John Bowes, Chairman, CEO, Darien Rowayton Bank and Daniel Dolcetti.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:35 p.m.

Ms. Klein explained the public speaking portion of the meeting. Mr. Crary indicated the sign-up sheet for people who wished to make a statement during the meeting.

There was a request to move Agenda Item G to the beginning of the Agenda, and to move Agenda Item E forward to replace Agenda Item C.

FIRST SELECTWOMAN'S REPORT

Ms. Klein reported that she had met with the Edgerton Street neighbors regarding the issue of the Senior Center and perhaps using the site as a Town pool. It was an opportunity to discuss and listen to their concerns and answer any questions they had as to where the Board of Selectmen stood in relation to the Senior Center. She said the residents' concerns included the intensity of the use of the Senior Center property; why not leave the property as open space rather than building an addition or a pool; lighting concerns; drainage issues and a concern about a pool being in compliance with their own ordinances.

There was an action and review on the accident that occurred on I-95 on January 6th. Lieutenant Meraviglia from Troop G in Bridgeport came to Town Hall and met with various town officials and police representatives to discuss the incident. Ms. Klein stated that an after-action review is essential whenever an accident occurs on I-95 and that Troop G will come down and make a presentation of all of the events that unfolded in response to the accident. It gives the Town a better understanding of what happened, and most importantly, when the Board reviews these accidents, they gain a better understanding and identify areas and suggestions for improvements.

The next step will be to send a letter to the State Department of Transportation to request signs, and to find out how contractors are dispatched around the state in response to these accidents.

Ms. Klein said another hot topic is the Senior Dump Fees. She received a number of complaints and the item will be put on a future agenda for the Board to review and discuss.

Ms. Klein indicated several upcoming meetings, including Tuesday, March 21, at 7:30 p.m.; Thursday, March 23rd, at 10:00 a.m.; and Tuesday, March 28th, at 7:30 p.m. She would like to know which Board members will be attending the March 28th meeting.

Ms. Klein said the next item in her report was the Waiving of Requirements for Competitive Bidding under Section 46 of the Town Charter. In conformance with Section 46 of the Town Charter she has approved the waiving of the requirements for competitive bidding for the repair of the Town Hall elevator. It was determined that the piston is worn and needs to be replaced. The piston is encased in a concrete sleeve and must be jackhammered out of the surrounding concrete. The elevator is the only access to the second floor of the Town Hall for handicapped and elderly residents. The cost of the repair is approximately \$34,600 and funds are available in the Town Hall reserve funds. Ms. Klein has approved the repair.

Ms. Santarella asked Ms. Klein when she would meet with the Edgerton Street neighbors at the Senior Center; Ms. Santarella said she was told that either tomorrow night or Wednesday night they were meeting at the Senior Center. She asked who was speaking and was the Board invited. Ms. Santarella asked if they wanted the Board there. The representative said the Board could not come to the meeting, it was a discussion between the residents.

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

Mr. Crary stated that the Town's annual spring cleanup would not occur this year, due to the decrease in staff in the Dept. of Public Works and a decrease in funds. He stated that homeowners can bring their items to the dump. He explained that the spring cleanup takes two weeks out of the DPW's schedule and prevents them from doing other projects until the cleanup is completed.

Ms. Santarella said she was not clear on that. She said she remembered that during budget season she was the one who said that the Board needed to have a discussion about this to get some input from the public, because there were a lot of folks who rely on that cleanup day. She wanted to know why the decision was made without the Board having a public discussion about it. Mr. Crary said there was a discussion. Ms. Santarella said it was talked about during the budget discussions and Mr. Robert Steeger was present at the meeting. She stated she said publicly at that meeting that the Board needed to have a public discussion about it to have input from the community because there are a lot of people who rely on that cleanup day and she did not understand why this decision was made without a public discussion.

Mr. Crary said the Board could consider it any time they liked. Ms. Santarella said she would like it on the agenda for the next meeting. Mr. Crary explained that there was a lack of staff to assign to the cleanup and it was an item that had to be cut.

A resident questioned if they could bring items to the dump if they don't have a dump sticker. Another resident asked what was the anticipated savings in a dollar amount. Mr. Crary said it was not a dollar amount savings, but an overall savings. Mr. Crary stated the town would also be cutting back on the cleaning of catch basins and street sweeping, although these activities will take place. He said that after discussions with the DPW it was agreed that the spring cleanup was a service that the town could do without.

Ms. Klein said that based on the response that they have received over the past two-and-a-half years and e-mails she has received, she would say that the community is split in half as to whether or not this is a service that they would like to see continue. There is a lot of concern about the mess along the side of the road.

5. REPORT ON THE STATUS OF THE HEALTH DISTRICT PLANNING COMMITTEE

Ms. Young said that the last meeting was held on March 9. The meeting included a presentation by Dr. David Reed. Mr. Tim Callahan also gave a brief presentation. She stated that the next meeting will be held later this evening at 7:30 p.m. in Room 206 and the next meeting will be held on April 20th. She said that sometime between tonight and April 20th there will be a meeting of the Darien members. Ms. Young distributed documents to the Board members.

Mr. Newman asked Ms. Young if she would raise some questions on his behalf. One question was about an article in the newspaper where a gentleman was quoted as saying "We'll make sure to let the people know what we decide." He asked that this gentleman be informed that it is the Board of Selectmen who decides whether they will do this or not. Ms. Young said the gentleman was not part of the committee. Mr. Newman said it was important that the public understand that it is the Board of Selectmen who decides whether they do this or not do this.

Mr. Newman's other statement was that he would like to have some opinion as to whether or not this is a step among several steps, because the major difference between Fairfield County and Westchester County, Nassau County and Suffolk County is that they have regionalized everything and that's why their taxes are 50% higher than Darien's, and the loss of control in all of this is daunting. He would like to know whether or not there is a "death of a thousand cuts" element to this or not, and if this is the only time anyone will be coming to the town with a regionalization idea or is this really the first among many. He also requested accurate information as to how the town can get out of this if they decide they don't like it. If there are three or more members, can any single town opt out of it again?

Ms. Klein asked if there has been any estimate of potential cost savings. Ms. Young said the committee would be doing the financials during their meeting tonight and there will be a public hearing on this topic.

- ** MS. SANTARELLA MOVED THAT THE AGENDA BE AMENDED TO TAKE ITEM G AS THE FIRST ITEM TO BE DISCUSSED UNDER NEW BUSINESS, AND ITEM E BE MOVED UP TO BE THE SECOND ITEM DISCUSSED UNDER NEW BUSINESS.**
- ** MS. YOUNG SECONDED.**
- ** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

6. NEW BUSINESS

- g) Accept a gift of \$15,000 from the Monuments and Ceremonies Commission to create a *Veterans Memorial Circle* in front of Town Hall.**

Ms. Klein accepted the \$15,000 gift to cover expenses for the creation of a Veteran's Memorial Circle in front of Town Hall.

- ** MS. THORNE MOTIONED TO ACCEPT THE DONATION OF \$15,000 FOR THE CREATION OF A VETERANS MEMORIAL CIRCLE.**
- ** MS. YOUNG SECONDED.**
- ** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

e) Human Services Planning Council – Report

Ms. Kiki Karpen (sp) and Ms. Martha Rhein of the Human Services Planning Council gave a brief presentation. They thanked the Board for allowing them to speak before them this evening.

Ms. Rhein said that last spring after strategic planning sessions, the Human Services Planning Council was created with members including various Selectmen, the Superintendent of Schools; the Chief of Police, community leaders and volunteers. The mission of this organization is health and human service needs assessment; education the community about these; identify, initiate and pursue solutions through leadership, networking, operation, cooperation, funding, etc., within the community. The Council's first initiatives include affordable housing; education advocacy and possible funding opportunities locally and regionally. They have had someone come to one of their meetings who discussed what has been going on locally and what has been going on regionally and how the Council as an organization might play a role in this.

Ms. Ryan said the Council is now involved in assessment of mental health and plan to go out to the community and share what they know about resources and programs that are offered, and are hoping to visit many residents in various organizations and agencies and ask them to bring their input and resources to the Council. The Council is working with the United Way on domestic violence, and working in schools and classrooms to teach students about bullying and anger management, and substance and alcohol abuse, to prevent incidents of substance

abuse and domestic violence. They are working with other organizations in the region to address the needs of people with disabilities and emergency preparedness in the community.

She stated there is a new column in the Darien Times recognizing insights. Ms. Ryan stated that this is your needs-assessment body; call and talk to us. She stated that youth can get resources from the blue book for Darien teens.

Ms. Thorne made a comment of appreciation for the organization they've undertaken and pulling together tasks that the United Way has done in different ways in the past. She thanked Ms. Ryan and Ms. Karpen (sp) for their efforts.

a) Discuss Senior Center Task Force

Ms. Klein brought the Board up to date since the last discussion on this item in December 2005. She said it has been suggested that they can do something else besides a Senior Center on that property. It will cost \$4.5 million to purchase the library property. Her recommendation was to dissolve the Task Force. The Task Force fulfilled their charge.

Mr. Newman said this is the only piece of land that the Town owns that it can do something on. He said that the assessment and work done by the task force has been very valuable and nevertheless, it does not excuse us to get the highest and best use of the property and to look at all possibilities .

Discussion followed. Ms. Klein suggested that focus groups be formed to find out what the community's vision is. She questioned what are the real needs. Ms. Santarella asked that the item be put on the next agenda. Mr. Newman said they need to anticipate what are alternate likely uses. After further discussion, Ms. Klein said the Board will take action on this item at the next meeting.

Mr. Joseph Warren, RTM Parks & Recreation, discussed the remodeling of rooms at the Senior Center. He suggested that before investing time and money, the Board ought to tell the community what should be done with the land. He said the site ought to be limited to Senior Center activities.

Ms. Virginia Iqbal, resident of Edgerton Street, said that if the Board decides to do a feasibility study, they should study not only the capability of the site but also the mental impact of the neighborhood. She said the Senior Center Task Force has two opinions and it was confusing. She suggested that it not be called a pool but a sports complex.

Mr. George Zengo asked why are they talking about a new task force. He said he was shocked by the pool proposal and the arrogance against the Senior Center. He said the pool proposal was two and a half, three times the size of the current Senior Center and suggested the Senior Center shut down for a year or longer so

construction can proceed. He said they do not need to have a sports complex managed by the YMCA and there are political aspects to consider.

Ms. Cheryl Russell, RTM Chairman, Parks & Recreation Committee, said she has spoken with the Town Council and Mr. Fox. She said the Connecticut State Statute protects town-owned land and parkland. The land is dedicated through a deed and through use. There are restrictions on it, such as no multi-family construction. She said the land was given to the town for a Senior Center and the State Statute says they will have to swap land in like-kind. Ms. Russell asked the Board to wait a week or two weeks until she and Mr. Fox can research the issue.

b) Discuss request from the Darien Rowayton Bank and the Dolcettis for the permission to use municipal and commercial parking spaces during off hours

Mr. John Bowes, Chairman and CEO of the Darien Rowayton Bank described the application that they and the Dolcettis have filed with the Town Planning & Zoning Commission to develop six parcels of property along the Post Road in the business district. The Bank and the Dolcettis are requesting the Town Parking Authority to permit the use of municipal lots in the vicinity for parking after hours.

Mr. Daniel Dolcetti discussed the parking for a high-end restaurant, which he plans to build and says the town wants. The restaurant will include valet parking and 350 square feet of kitchen.

After discussion it was decided to put this item on the agenda for the next meeting on April 3rd. Ms. Santarella asked that a traffic report be submitted to the Board.

c) Discuss and Take Action on Charge to Affordable Housing Commission

Mr. Newman said he thought this item was deferred and said this item was not a priority of this Board. He said he has no difference of opinion but wants to wait and see what happens as there is too much misinformation put forward. He said he thought the Board was going to wait. Ms. Klein said she saw it as two separate issues. A brief discussion followed.

No action was taken on this item.

d) Accept a gift of \$3,500 from Darien Pool, LLC to begin landscaping the circle in front of Town Hall.

**** MS. SANTARELLA MOTIONED TO ACCEPT THE GIFT OF \$3,500 FROM DARIEN POOL FOR LANDSCAPING THE CIRCLE IN FRONT OF TOWN HALL.**

**** MR. NEWMAN SECONDED.**
**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

e) Transfers:

There was a request to move Item 1 up to the top of the list. Ms. Klein agreed.

1. Darien Fire Department

**** MS. SANTARELLA MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE
FOLLOWING TRANSFER:**

**RESOLVED,
THAT THE FOLLOWING TRANSFER OF APPROPRIATIONS IS
APPROVED FOR REFERRAL TO THE BOARD OF FINANCE:
ACCOUNT NO. 10704000-86600 CONTINGENCY, \$7,044 TO
ACCOUNT NO. 10303415-82040 MOTORIZED EQUIP
REPAIR/MAINT, TOTAL \$7,044.**

**** MS. THORNE SECONDED.**
**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

2. Police Department – Heating Oil

**** MS. SANTARELLA MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE
FOLLOWING TRANSFER:**

**RESOLVED,
THAT THE FOLLOWING TRANSFER OF APPROPRIATIONS IS
APPROVED FOR REFERRAL TO THE BOARD OF FINANCE:
ACCOUNT NO. 10302233-81001 PATROL-WAGES-FT, \$2,482 BE
TRANSFERRED TO ACCOUNT NO. 10302323-83005 STA. OPR. &
MAINT. – HEATING FUEL, TOTAL \$2,482.**

**** MS. THORNE SECONDED.**
**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

3. Police Department – Motorcycle Patrol Program

**** MS. SANTARELLA MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE
FOLLOWING TRANSFER:**

**RESOLVED,
THAT THE FOLLOWING TRANSFER OF APPROPRIATIONS IS
APPROVED FOR REFERRAL TO THE BOARD OF FINANCE:**

ACCOUNT NO. 10202233-18001 PATROL WAGES-FT, \$5,650 BE TRANSFERRED TO ACCOUNT NO. TBD, MOTORCYCLE-LEASE & EQUIP. , TOTAL \$5,650.

- ** MS. THORNE SECONDED.**
- ** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

4. Planning & Zoning Department

- ** MS. THORNE MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING TRANSFER:**

**RESOLVED,
THAT THE FOLLOWING TRANSFER OF APPROPRIATIONS IS APPROVED FOR REFERRAL TO THE BOARD OF FINANCE:
ACCOUNT NO. 10704000-86600 CONTINGENCY \$1,500 TO
ACCOUNT NO. 1022011-82004 P&Z CLERICAL, \$450; ACCOUNT
NO. 10201011-83004 MOTOR FUEL & LUBRICANTS, \$575;
ACCOUNT NO. 10203011-82009 ZBA ADVERTISING, \$475; FOR A
TOTAL OF \$1,500.**

- ** MR. NEWMAN SECONDED.**
- ** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

5. Building Department

- ** MS. SANTARELLA MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING TRANSFER:**

**RESOLVED,
THAT THE FOLLOWING TRANSFER OF APPROPRIATIONS IS APPROVED FOR REFERRAL TO THE BOARD OF FINANCE:
ACCOUNT NO. 10704000-86600 CONTINGENCY \$2,900 TO
ACCOUNT NO. 10301011-82001 TRAVEL, \$1,600; ACCOUNT NO.
10201011-82011 MICROFILMING, \$1,000; ACCOUNT NO.
10301011-83001 OFFICE SUPPLIES, \$300; FOR A TOTAL OF
\$2,900.**

- ** MS. THORNE SECONDED.**
- ** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

ADJOURNMENT

**** MS. SANTARELLA MOTIONED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING.
** MS. THORNE SECONDED.
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda J. Hayes
Telesco Secretarial Services